



### **S13 (1) Report on Implementation**

This is the fifth year Council has implemented its Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2017, our first such action plan, with 78 actions. The Plan and our disability information hub can be found at [northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/services/disability](http://northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/services/disability). This report will be provided to the Minister for Disability Services and the NSW Disability Council.

We continued implementing the plan this year to help create a more inclusive and accessible community. Now 53% of all actions are complete, while the remaining are ongoing actions that continue through our programs, capital works and upgraded practices and systems. In June 2022, a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) was adopted, following extensive community engagement. This is available online and sets out our ongoing journey in inclusion.

#### **Focus Area 1: Develop positive community attitudes and behaviours**

Our Library Service provided promotional activities for Mental Health Awareness Week and International Day of People with Disability. In addition to the Dementia Friendly training undertaken by staff, a Dementia café commenced at Mona Vale Library this year, facilitated by Dementia Australia.

Other programs delivered and practices improved include:

- our Gatekeeper program which trains community members in suicide prevention. 736 people on the Northern Beaches are now trained, and another 55 are in progress

- recognition by Dementia Australia as working towards being a dementia friendly organisation. 710 staff have completed the dementia friendly training, and 7 out of 10 dementia audits have been conducted on identified Council facilities
- implementing our Event Accessibility and Inclusion Guidelines across Council services. Examples include Council meetings as well as programs run by our Events team, Community Development, Children's centres, Libraries, Coastal Environment Centre, Bushcare volunteers' plant nursery, and aquatic centres
- inclusive media, using positive images of people with disability in our publications, e.g. more use of accessible media such as easy read documents, infographics, video footage and website content which meets international accessibility standards
- mandatory annual staff training on inclusion and disability, including induction of new staff
- encouraging businesses to be inclusive of people with assistance animals, by providing direct advice to food businesses and guidance in our newsletters and website
- promotion of and judging the annual Access and Inclusion Award at the Northern Beaches Local Business Awards - this recognises and encourages inclusive local businesses.

### **Focus Area 2: Create liveable communities**

Community Development Officers have a broad range of skills, including specialist disability knowledge. They provide ongoing information and referral to community members and distribute a monthly Disability Newsletter to over 1,300 readers. Several improvements have been made to our online Disability information hub, and a new filter category was added to the What's On calendar function for disability events. Staff attend regular networks with local services including other levels of government and ongoing implementation of the NDIS. Community Development staff work with service providers to build partnerships, provide information and referral to community programs, events and local services, and identify opportunities for advocacy. Council continues to sponsor the Disability Inclusion category of the Northern Beaches Local Business Awards, providing comprehensive promotion of this category, targeted business engagement, and a recent trial of free online disability customer service training.

Accessibility audits were conducted in various buildings, amenities, parks, parking spaces, kerb ramps, footpaths and wharves to help prioritise sites for improvement. Collaroy, Manly, Dee Why and Mona Vale are being audited for accessible bus stop locations and footpath gradients and will be updated on Council's online accessibility map when finalised. Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans for Avalon and Manly were prepared in conjunction with Place Plans, which recommended improvements to connectivity and accessibility.

This year accessibility works included:

- various buildings, paths, kerbs, bus stops, wharves, and carparks, including Dee Why Town Centre streetscape, and Warriewood Valley pedestrian and cycleway network
- playgrounds at Clontarf, Little Manly, Quarry Reserve (North Manly) and Gunyah Reserve (Avalon)
- opening of the new fully accessible Mona Vale Surf Club, and improvements at other surf clubs with accessible amenities, stairs, balconies, and lifts. Construction continues on the new accessible Long Reef Surf Club
- public amenities at East Esplanade and Soldiers Memorial Hall (Manly), LM Graham reserve (Fairlight), Clontarf, Jacka Park (Freshwater), Reub Hudson oval (Curl Curl) and Apex Park (Mona Vale). Accessible amenities are also being integrated into all new and improved Council buildings and facilities
- accessible ramps at North Narrabeen Rockpool, Collaroy Beach, and Clontarf Beach
- improvements to recreational trails at Manly Dam and McKillop Park (Freshwater), to provide accessible connections through to bushland and the foreshore
- better library access at Forestville, Manly, Mona Vale and Warringah Mall libraries, with mobile shelving allowing the creation of inclusive spaces.

There are now more inclusive library resources such as improved digital devices for e-Audio offerings for Home Library Service clients, a Dementia Friendly collection, and hearing loop technology was installed at Mona Vale Library. Regular children's programs now include sign language resources and online broadcasts.

Accessible programs and events were provided through the year across a range of services. Accessibility has been embedded in the planning stage for choice of venue, accessibility features and amenities, and, where needed, outdoor events are provided with mobile accessible bathrooms.

### **Focus Area 3: Support access to meaningful employment**

Council adopted a new Workforce Management Strategy 2022 - 2026. One of the key themes is 'Diversity and Inclusion', and contains actions to:

- research the eligibility for inclusive employer certifications
- review and improve staff training in relation to inclusion and access
- review recruitment processes and practices to ensure they are inclusive.

Our Local Strategic Planning Statement is guiding the development of commercial centres, with actions on improving access and inclusion to help increase local employment opportunities.

Our environmental volunteer programs in Bushcare, community nurseries and the Coastal Environment Centre are all-inclusive, providing sustainable and social outcomes to all participants.

Council's bush regeneration program also works closely with Bushlink which employs young people with intellectual disabilities.

**Focus Area 4: Improve access to Council services through better systems and processes**

The community participated in a review of our Community Engagement Policy and Strategy, including feedback on implementing *Principle 3: to create open, accessible and diverse engagement opportunities*. We are considering how to diversify our engagement activities to enable participation from the whole community, including any under-represented communities. Community Engagement Plans for all projects address inclusion through physical access and timing of events; visual and audio products; and inclusive submission options.

Other improvements made to improve accessibility of Council's systems include:

- online information, forms and booking systems improved for readability and ease of use
- more information and services available online for all residents, providing greater inclusion for accessing services, bookings and payments
- new Council documents, web content, media and meetings online accessibility standards for visual content and readability, including the use of a range of formats. Video is developed with audio descriptors, transcripts and closed captions

- the online accessibility map which continues to have more features added to it each year, for easily finding accessible facilities and routes across the Northern Beaches e.g., buildings, amenities, playgrounds, rock pools and more.

Our regular Disability Newsletter continues to provide a platform to promote the availability of accessible systems and processes and to seek feedback on how to improve these further.